

REUSABLE SCHOOL NEWS

CALIFORNIA INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD

SPRING 1995

A Special Earth Day Celebration

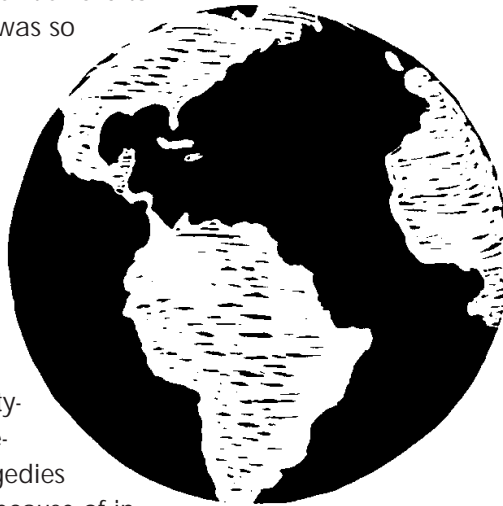
Earth Day is always a special event for all of us who are dedicated to saving our planet. This is especially true this year because on April 22, 1995, the world will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. For a quarter of a century, citizens throughout the United States and abroad have maintained an awareness of their connection with nature. They are learning more, speaking out, and taking effective action in defense of the environment.

Earth Day was born from public discontent about environmental degradation in the late 60s. Much of the political energy and anger that today focuses on crime, in those days focused on environmental disasters. It's hard to believe that once, the Cuyahoga River was so polluted that it often caught fire. At one time, many birds were unable to reproduce because of DDT and other pesticides. We also polluted our own nests by allowing toxic wastes to leak into our neighborhoods. Even the life of our national symbol, the bald eagle, was threatened by poison-laden bait set out by ranchers.

We have come a long way in the twenty-five years since Earth Day was first celebrated in 1970. The environmental tragedies described above are part of our past because of individual citizen education and action. However, we must continue to look ahead at future threats to nature and the adverse consequences of human actions.

This year, the CIWMB is doing its part to educate students about environmental problems in resource management. The Schools Section is making available a free set of Earth Day activities contained in its *Closing the Loop Sampler*. This sampler is a small subset of *Closing the Loop*, a compilation of over 40 teacher-led activities directed at helping students discover and nurture an environmental ethic and stewardship for natural resources. Activities focus on solid waste and environmental awareness topics and are adjustable across subjects and K-12 grade levels. In this issue of the News, we have enclosed a lesson from our *Closing the Loop Sampler*.

If you would like a complimentary copy of our *Closing the Loop Sampler*, please call (916) 255-2296.



Reusable School News (the News) is published by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB), the agency responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of a statewide integrated waste management program. CIWMB provides technical assistance and resource information to school districts in developing waste prevention and recycling programs. The News highlights case studies showcasing the economic and environmental benefits of establishing a district-wide waste reduction program. It is being sent to local governments, school districts, schools and other interested parties. For more information, call the Schools Section at (916) 255-2296.

Closing The Loop—An Integrated Approach To Teaching Waste Management

What is Closing the Loop?

The California version of *Closing the Loop—Integrated Waste Management Activities for School and Home* is adapted from the original published by Chadbourne and Chadbourne, Inc. in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) and the California Department of Education have collaborated in updating technical concepts and pedagogical approaches from the original text, revised and improved graphics and format, and have converted Ohio-specific data to reflect information consistent with California.

Closing the Loop was selected from a number of quality integrated waste management instructional materials collected nationwide and evaluated by 24 top California environmental educators using an assessment tool based upon California education frameworks and state-of-the-art integrated waste management concepts. In addition, eight K-8 teachers field tested this curriculum in their classrooms and offered suggestions for revision and improvement. As a result of this field testing, improvements have been made in lesson presentation and content, particularly with grades K-3.

What is in Closing the Loop?

Closing the Loop is a compilation of activities focused on helping students discover and nurture an environmental ethic and stewardship for natural resources. *Closing the Loop* is also a resource tool for educators interested in weaving waste management concepts into their curriculum. The activities are grouped under three thematic headings:

Everything ends up somewhere;

We have options and we make choices; and

Everything is connected.

The activities are hands-on and problem-centered. Students are encouraged to explore their natural environment, identify waste management issues, and engage in action projects.

There is more?

In addition to the comprehensive, interdisciplinary lessons, a teacher background on integrated waste management has been adapted from the Association of Vermont Recyclers Teacher Resource Guide. This background supplement provides teachers with a comprehensive understanding of the principles of integrated waste management and can work as a foundation from which instruction can begin. Statistical and historical information from local, national, and global perspectives is included and may be incorporated in specific lessons as well.

How can you get a copy of *Closing the Loop*?

You can receive a copy of *Closing the Loop* at **no cost** by attending one of our training workshops. The CIWMB will be holding workshops at the following events:

Inland Empire Environmental Expo,
San Bernardino, April 22 (For registration-Darleen Stoner, (909) 880-5681.)

California Science Teacher's Association,
San Jose, September 29-30 and October 1, (For registration-Gloriane Hirata, (408) 997-1685.)

If you are interested in having the CIWMB come to your district to hold a *Closing the Loop* workshop at no cost, or would like to be added to our mailing list so you can be notified of upcoming workshops, please contact us for more information at (916) 255-2296.



School District Waste Reduction Survey

The CIWMB wants to thank those school districts who responded to our 1994 School District Waste Reduction Survey. Your responses are vital to our effectiveness in promoting waste reduction by school districts. The surveys also help us keep track of successful programs, while trying to assess schools who may need our assistance in establishing a program.

The survey responses are encouraging. Waste reduction programs are starting or expanding at schools in all areas of California. A total of 249 districts returned our survey with more than 100 requesting technical assistance. We are confident that many of these districts will soon begin programs of their own.

We appreciate all the interest and enthusiasm school districts have expressed regarding waste prevention and recycling. Your contributions are essential to California reaching its goal of reducing waste sent to landfills by 50 percent by the year 2000. Even more important, these programs in schools will help our children develop attitudes and skills that reduce demand placed on earth's resources.

Gold Trail Union Elementary Does It Right!!

Gold Trail Union Elementary School District in El Dorado County has been "doing the right thing" for a very long time. Beginning in 1985, paper has been collected for recycling from the two schools in the district. MORE Paper Recycling, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing jobs and training to developmentally disabled adults and children, picks up mixed and white paper for recycling. The students maintain the recycling bins and do the sorting. In 1992, the district expanded its recycling program by working out an agreement with the vendor to recycle cardboard. The schools in the district also compost leaves, grass, and prunings and use the compost for their outdoor gardens. Not to leave out wiggly friends, the district also maintains an outdoor worm compost bin!! For more information, call Steven Herrington at (916) 626-3194.

The State, Cities, and Counties Team Up to Promote Waste Prevention Education

The CIWMB is partnering with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the League of California Cities (League) to launch a collaborative effort over the next 12-18 months to customize waste prevention education programs for all local governments.

Cities and counties will be surveyed by CSAC and League representatives to identify what kind of materials and assistance they need to implement local waste prevention campaigns. Many cities and counties have education programs already in place, but may need assistance with enhancing and/or expanding their existing programs. CSAC and the League will provide consulting services and technical support and coordinate the creation of new educational materials where necessary.

The League will take the lead on developing a Reference Center, accessible to all cities and counties, to house a collection of educational waste prevention materials created by the cities and counties. This mechanism will allow cities and counties to share ideas and materials, thus eliminating "reinventing the wheel."

How can you get involved? Let your local recycling coordinator, director of public works, or environmental management officer know what your needs are for implementing more and better public education and school outreach programs. When the regional consultants for the League and CSAC contact your city or county, this important information can then be included and considered.

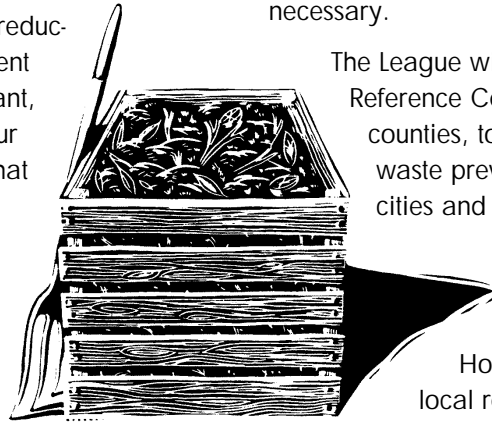
We are confident this partnership will facilitate a coordinated, consistent, and customized approach to assist cities and counties with their waste prevention education efforts.

If you have questions about this project, please call the contract manager, Becky Williams, at (916) 255-2456.

Zeroing In On Zero Waste

Oak Hills Elementary School, in Ventura county, has an aggressive waste reduction goal—zero waste generation! The school introduced the "Zero Waste Policy," to eliminate waste during lunch and snack times. The pilot project builds on a comprehensive waste reduction program already carried out at all six schools within Oak Park Unified School District. The policy contains the following rules:

Students who bring lunch or snacks to school will use only a reusable container.



All food in this container will be packaged in reusable containers. If plastic bags are used they must be brought home and used repeatedly for the life of the bag. Napkins must be cloth and reusable—no paper.

Students will not bring food to school that is packaged. Parents are encouraged to purchase food in larger quantities and then use reusable containers to send it to school.

Drinks must be in reusable containers or recyclable containers. Acceptable recyclable containers include plastic with a recycling code of 1 or 2 on the bottom or aluminum cans. No Glass. The preferable method is to send drinks to school in a thermos or other container. No straws are allowed. Small box drink containers are prohibited.

Student service workers will monitor recycling containers daily. They will remind younger students not to throw away reusable containers. STUDENTS WILL THROW NOTHING AWAY.

Enforcement of Waste Reduction Policy

Students and parents are complying with the new policy. Resistance is limited, but it does require attention from Oak Hill's Principal, Anthony Knight. Students are telling him that they are "eating better" with the new lunches their parents are packing. Besides reducing waste and perhaps eating better, students find another positive benefit of the new rules. Less time is spent cleaning up trash, saving precious recess minutes for games. Mr. Knight commends the students and parents for their willing attitudes and active participation.

At Oak Hills Elementary, the "Zero Waste Policy" and other waste reduction efforts have resulted in the removal of trash cans from the school campus. Five hun-

dred students fill only one 55-gallon can of trash during the lunch period. This is a dramatic reduction—nearly 90 percent—from the eight cans filled by the same number of students last year!

For more information about the Oak Hills Elementary School program, contact Mr. Anthony Knight at (818) 707-4224.

A Letter To Our Readers

Dear Recycling Educators:

At our school site we have been recycling materials for about a year, but recognized that in order to "close the loop," we would need to start purchasing school supplies made from recycled materials. Locating supplies that are not cost prohibitive had proven extremely difficult. In stocking our copy machines, we finally found success!

Since October, we, the staff at Longfellow, have been using recycled copy paper for all our copying needs. It is made from 100 percent recycled materials, is much easier to read given the reduced glare, and is costing us no more than what we had been paying previously. The paper is "Hammermill Unity DP" available from Zellerbach in South San Francisco.

We hope that this resource will be of use to you, and support your efforts in preserving our children's future. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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